July 16, 2019

Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)

Fitch Mountain Park and Open Space Preserve Improvements Project ECM PIN CW-857424; WDID 1B190030WNSO

Sonoma County

On March 29, 2019, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the City of Healdsburg (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) for activities related to the proposed Fitch Mountain Park and Open Space Preserve Improvements. On May 15 and May 24, 2019, additional information was submitted to the Regional Water Board and the application was determined to be complete.

Project Location

The Project is located at 908 Chanticleer Way, Healdsburg, California, at latitude 38.621807°N and longitude 122.848610°W. The proposed project would cause disturbances to the Russian River, within the Lower Russian River Hydrologic Area (114.20).

Project Description

The Project would improve public access and recreational amenities of Fitch Mountain Park and Open Space Preserve by stabilizing two actively eroding forks (Site 1 and Site 2) of an unnamed ephemeral drainage with rock grade control structures.

The grade control structure at Site 1, located in the western branch of the tributary, would be constructed within a 46-square-foot area along 12 linear feet of channel. The rock headcut repair at this site would include excavating 7 cubic yards of soil and placing a total of 5.3 cubic yards of rip rap and 1.8 cubic yards of Class 2 permeable material. Approximately 144 square feet of filter fabric would be placed in and around the site. Construction of this headcut repair would require the removal of both native and non-native vegetation within a 92-square-foot area along 14 linear feet of channel.

The grade control structure at Site 2, located in the eastern branch of the tributary, would be constructed within a 66-square-foot area along 30 linear feet of channel. The rock headcut repair at this site would include excavating 11 cubic yards of soil and placing a total of 13.3 cubic yards of rip rap and 4.4 cubic yards of Class 2 permeable material. Approximately 360 square feet of filter fabric would be placed in and around this site. Construction of this headcut repair would require the removal of native and non-native vegetation within a 182-square-foot area along 32 linear feet of channel. Soil excavated for these headcut repairs would be re-used on site for hand grading of trails.

Additionally, a footbridge would be placed over the two branches of the tributary to reduce impacts to the stream caused by Preserve users walking across the channel. This footbridge would be 44 feet long and would span the length of the two tributary branches. The bridge and bridge footings are outside top of bank and would not disturb the channels.

Project construction would require the removal of native vegetation, including a small amount of riparian vegetation, as well as some ground disturbance in areas that could support special-status plant species.

Construction Timing
The project is expected to be completed in two construction seasons, between July 2019, and October 2020. Hours of construction are between 7am and 6pm, Monday through Friday with no work to be performed on the weekends.

Impacts
Approximately 0.005 acres of state waters will be permanently impacted as a result of the Project.

Mitigation for Project Impacts
The Applicant proposes to remove invasive and non-native plant species from approximately 0.22 acres adjacent to the ephemeral drainage and both eroding drainage forks. These areas would be revegetated with native trees, shrubs, vines, ferns, grasses, and herbaceous perennials. An additional 0.56 acres of the Preserve will be revegetated with native species.

Annual monitoring reports containing geo-referenced photographs would be prepared and submitted no later than December 31 for a period of three years following construction completion. The repaired ephemeral drainage forks would be visually assessed each spring (following rainy season) and any erosion or significant changes to the as-built condition would be treated. Revegetated areas would be assessed in late summer and monitored for overall plant health, survivorship, and signs of stress. Plantings would be considered successful if overall woody species survival is 85% at the end of three years. Replacement plantings would be required in years when survival (including volunteers) is below 85%. Vegetative cover monitoring is not proposed because planting is almost exclusively in locations where dense evergreen canopy limits understory growth.

No ground disturbance would occur within the three delineated wetlands. Orange construction safety fence would surround each wetland to prevent access. Only the minimum amount of riparian and wetland vegetation would be removed to achieve project goals. These impacted areas would be restored using either salvaged plants or those sourced from within the Russian River Watershed. All site restoration and erosion control seeding would include only native species from the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed or Sonoma County. Areas of ground disturbance would be monitored for invasive species infestation.

Sediment control measures, including wattles, silt fences and sandbag barriers would be installed to protect downstream waterways. Additional Best Management Practices (BMPs) as described in the current CASQA stormwater BMP handbook for construction or Caltrans Storm Water Quality Handbook would be implemented as needed. Vehicles and equipment would be inspected for leaks by the Project Designer before approval for use. Fueling would take place outside of the gully areas and wetlands and emergency spill containment and absorption materials would be on-site.

Post-Construction Storm Water Treatment
The Project is a standalone pedestrian pathway and will not generate concentrated stormwater runoff of significance, thus Stormwater BMPs and LID treatment are not required.

Total Maximum Daily Load
The Russian River is identified as impaired for sediment and temperature under Clean Water Act Section 303(d).

Other Agency Permits
The applicant has applied to the United States Army Corps of Engineers for Nationwide Permit No. 18 (Non-Reporting), pursuant to section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The applicant has also submitted a section 1600 Notification of Lake or Streambed Alteration to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The applicant has also applied for a City of Healdsburg Building Permit.

CEQA
On November 20, 2017, the City of Healdsburg, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, produced a Mitigated Negative Declaration and filed it with the State Clearinghouse (SCH No. 2017092062), pursuant to CEQA guidelines.

Public Comments
Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all phone calls and comments submitted in writing and received within a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this notice and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Ryan Bey at (707) 576-2679 or Ryan.Bey@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed activities. The Regional Water Board's project file includes the application for certification and additional details of the proposed project, including maps and design drawings. Project documents and any comments received are on file and may be reviewed or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.